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## Edward A. Braithwaite

With the death of Dr. Edward A. Braithwaite, Alberta has lost still another of the fast-dwindling band of old-timers who arrived "before the railway."

Dr. Braithwaite's professional career spanned a period of sixty-five years—the whole gap, in fact, between the days of buffalo hunts and Indian wars and the present. He came to the west in 1884 as a medical officer with the Northwest Mounted Police, and served in that capacity through the Riel Rebellion. Though he went into private practice in 1892, he retained his connection with the force, and at the date of his final retirement in 1931, he had the longest record of service in the history of the R.C.M.P.

His police service, however, was only a small portion of his public labors. He was appointed coroner at Edmonton for the old Northwest Territories government in 1896 and when the province of Alberta was formed he was continued in this office, eventually becoming chief coroner of the province. He retired from this post only last year. His service of nearly 52 years as a coroner was unequalled in Canada and probably in the world; he is said to have presided over at least 8,000 inquests.

This office has always been a highly responsible one, and in the early days it was extremely strenuous and dangerous as well, involving long journeys into the wilderness in all kinds of weather, and encounters with unpredictable Indian bands. It is due in very large measure to Dr. Braithwaite's work under difficult conditions that this important branch of law enforcement was established on a proper basis in the province.

Besides his service as coroner, Dr. Braithwaite also played a great part in organizing public health services in Alberta. He was Edmonton's first medical health officer, and set up the city's health department. He served as provincial inspector of hospitals for many years; established the St. John's Ambulance Association in Alberta and was long its commander; and served actively on the Canadian Medical Association and the Dominion Medical Council. With all this, he also found time to conduct an extensive private practice. Pioneer doctors were always busy men, but few can have had so crowded a life of service as Dr. Braithwaite.

He was one of the great figures of Alberta's and Edmonton's early days, and he will be long remembered.

Braithwaite pioneer

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